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Message Text

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53
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 EB-11 ACDA-19 IO-14 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

OMB-01 EURE-00 DRC-01 (ISO) W
---------- 072009
O R 181600Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5433
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USMISSION NATO
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 8413

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: SARDINIAN REGIONAL ELECTIONS

DIA FOR AA-2 AND DI-5

REF: ROME 8354

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AS COMMONLY PREDICTED, THE JUNE 16-17
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REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN SARDINIA RESULTED IN LOSSES FOR THE

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CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND NOTABLE GAINS BY THE SOCIALISTS. OTHER RESULTS WERE SIGNIFICANT INCREASES BY THE COMMUNISTS, A DROP BY THE NEO-FASCIST MSI FROM ITS 1972 VOTE TOTALS AND CCONTINUED DECLINE BY THE LIBERALS. THE VOTE IS BEING INTERPRETED BY THE LEFT AS A FURTHER CONFIRMATION THAT THE MAY 12 DIVORCE REFERENDUM RESULTS CONSTITUED A MAJOR POLITICAL TURN IN THEIR FAVOR, AND THIS ASSESSMENT IS LIKELY TO STIFFEN THE PSI ATTITUDE IN THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS TO REVIVE CENTER-LEFT COOPERATION WITHIN THE RUMOR GOVERNMENT. THE SARDINIAN ELECTION RESULTS WILL ALSO BE LIKELY TO INCREASE FERMENT WITHIN THE DC, AND CRITICISM OF THE LEADER-SHIP OF PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DC TOOK AN EXPECTED BEATING IN THE SARDINIAN ELECTIONS, DROPPING 6.3 PERCENT FROM ITS 1969 REGIONAL TOTALS AND 2.6 PERCENT FROM THE 1972 POLITICAL ELECTIONS TO 38.3 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. IN ADDITION TO FEELING THE EFFECTS OF THE GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE POLITICAL CLIMATE GENERATED BY THE REFERENDUM, THE DC PAID THE PRICE FOR FIVE YEARS OF POOR ADMINISTRATION BY THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN WHICH IT HELD A NEAR MAJORITY AS A FINAL STRAW, THE DC ORGANIZATION IN SARDINIA HAS BEEN RACKED BY FACTIONALISM AND TARRED BY POLITICAL SCANDAL. IN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SOMBER POST ELECTION COMMENT. FANFANI BLAMED DEFEAT ON LOCAL FACTORS BUT DID NOT TRY TO DISGUISE DC LOSSES. HE OBSERVED THAT THE ELECTION RESULTS WILL PROVIDE THE DC WITH FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

3. THE PSI AND PSDI BOTH GAINED WITH RESPECT TO THE 1972 POLITICAL ELECTIONS, THE SOCIALISTS ADVANCING TO 11.7 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND THE PSDI GAINING TO REACH 5.9 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL. THE PSI PICKED UP FOURT COUNCIL SEATS OVER ITS 1969 TOTALS, MATCHING A CORRESPONDING DC DROP, AND NOW IS INDISPENSIBLE TO THE DC IN FORMING A WORKABLE MAJORITY. THE REPUBLICANS HELD EVEN WITH 2.6 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND ONE COUNCIL SEAT.

4. THE COMMUNISTS, TOGETHER WITH THE PSI, APPARENTLY ABSORBED THE DEFUNCT PSIUP VOTE AND MUCH OF THE LOSS OF THE LEFTIST, AUTONOMIST SARDIANIAN ACTION PARTY. THE PCI GAINED 7.1 PERCENT OVER THE 1969 REGIONAL ELECTIONS AND 1.5 PERCENT OVER THE 1972 RESULTS TO ACHIEVE A TOTAL OF 26.8 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER INTERPRETED THE RESULTS AS A CONTINUATION OF TRENDS MADE CLEAR BY THE REFERENDUM AND A MANDATE
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FOR CHANGE BASED ON A "WIDE ACCORD OF POPULAR FORCES".

5. ALTHOUGH IT ADVANCED BY 1.1 PERCENT AND TWO COUNCIL SEATS OVER ITS 1969 REGIONAL TOTALS, THE FAR RIGHT FAILED TO MAINTAIN ITS MOMENTUM OF TWO YEARS AGO, AND TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE DROPPED BACK FROM ITS 1972 HIGH POINT OF 11.3 PERCENT TO 7.8 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THE ELECTIONS DEMONSTRATED ONCE AGAIN THAT THE MSI IS OVER-REPRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (AT 8.7 PERCENT), BUT IN

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REGIONAL TERMS THE MSI IS CLAIMING A FAR RIGHT GAIN.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ONLY CONSTITUTING 2.4 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORATE, THE SARDINIAN VOTE IS IMPORTANT AS THE FIRST POLITICAL TEST FOLLOWING THE DIVORCE REFERENDUM. OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO NOTE THAT THE REFERENDUM IN SARDINIA RESULTED IN A 55 TO 45 PERCENT VICTORY BY THE PRO-DIVORCE FORCES AND THAT THIS RESULT WAS SUBSTANTIALLY REPEATED IN THE RECENT VOTE RESULTS. ALTHOUGH IT IS HIGHLY DEBATABLE THAT THIS COINCIDENCE IS A VALID MEASURE OF THE ACTUAL EFFECT OF THE REFERENDUM ON POLITICAL VOTING PATTERNS, IT IS BEING TOUTED AS SUCH BY THE LEFT. THE PSI IS THUS ENCOURAGED IN ITS AMBITION TO PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE WITHIN THE CENTER LEFT AT THE EXPENSE OF A SOMEWHAT WEAKENED DC. THE PSI IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE MORE DEMANDING IN ITS CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE DC ON ECONOMIC POLICY. IT IS ALSO REPORTED TO US BY BOTH DC AND PSI SOURCES THAT THE PSI WILL NOW RENEW ITS EFFORTS TO FORCE A GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE (RIMPASTO) THAT WOULD GIVE THE PSI ONE OR MORE OF THE KEY MINISTERIES TRADITIONALLY HELD BY THE DC SUCH AS TREASURY, INTERIOR AND DEFENSE. IN SUM, THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT RESULTS OF THE SARDINIAN ELECTION OUTCOME WILL BE TO RENDER PRIME MINISTER RUMOR'S IMMEDIATE TASK MORE DIFFICULT, AND TO AUGMENT WITHIN THE DC PARTY THE EXISTING FERMENT AND CRITICISMS OF PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI.

7. DETAILED ELECTION RESULTS FOLLOW SEPTEL.VOLPE

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